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ABSTRACT

An annotated bibliography of books, stories, poems and other materials available for educators, mainly primary and elementary, who wish to teach about holidays is presented. Books, books in a series, and books with recordings are covered. The suitable grade level for use is identified for each annotation. A directory of the publishers from whom these materials are available is appended. (DB)

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Advisory List of Instructional Media

Holidays

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Media Evaluation Services
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603-1712
July 1990

Advisory List of Instructional Media

HOLIDAYS

Materials on this list were selected from those which publishers and producers have submitted for evaluation. Educators may assume that materials available for purchase not appearing on this list either were not submitted or were considered inappropriate for school purchase.

All titles on this bibliography are currently available for purchase. Prices shown are those quoted by publishers and producers but do not include postage and are subject to change. These materials are on display for examination in the Media Evaluation Center in Raleigh.

PLEASE DO NOT ORDER ITEMS ON THIS LIST FROM MEDIA EVALUATION SERVICES. Publishers and producers are listed at the end of this bibliography. An abbreviated or code name for the publisher or producer appearing in the bibliographic entry on this list appears in the DIRECTORY where the complete address follows the code name.

BOOKS

Alcott, Louisa May. AN OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING. 31 p. $14.95. Holiday, 1989. (ISBN 0-8234-0772-1) Grades 4-5

The enduring charm still attaches to Louise May Alcott's warm, cozy story of a brood of children who work together to produce Thanksgiving dinner after their parents are called away suddenly to assist an elderly relative. In this new edition, Michael McCurdy's wood engravings colored in somber, Pilgrim-worthy shades of maize, umber, mauve, brown, and wintry blue provide a sturdy complement to Alcott's hymn to the plain and simple virtues of the seven Bassett children. Large print and wide margins stretch the little story nicely, and, although the handsome illustrations may not appeal to young children so readily as other, more modern and colorful pictures do, their quaint effect blends nicely with the timeless tale of Yankee spunk--and the delicious kitchen tasks and broad, country dialect of the inventive little women and little men.

Baird, Anne. THE CHRISTMAS LAMB. unp. $12.88. Morrow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-07775-7) Grades K-2

Scuffy, a lamb at the zoo, is worried because people are preoccupied with Christmas instead of visiting the zoo. He misses all the attention, so instead of going to sleep as his parents have told him, he rushes off to find some action. Instead of company, he finds mostly mischief--getting stuck in a revolving door, for instance, and alarming a family by coming down its chimney and getting stuck. Eventually Scuffy finds himself part of a manger scene. Some of the children recognize him and lead him back to the zoo, where he is most happy to follow his parents' instructions to go to sleep. The color illustrations are not outstanding but good enough to attract young eyes to the book. Libraries with a substantial holiday collection will not find this a first choice item, but smaller collections may find it useful.

Bauer, Caroline Feller, ed. HALLOWEEN: STORIES AND POEMS. 78 p. $11.89. Lippincott, 1989. (ISBN 0-397-32301-8) Grades 2-6

With something for everybody in this bag of treats, librarians will be busy stamping Feller's well-rounded anthology of stories, poems, and even recipes and a bibliography. Poems by Lilian Moore, X. J. Kennedy, Judith Viorst, Paul Galdone, and others range from funny and spoofy to clever and eerie. Stories include "King of the Cats" and "The Hairy Toe," as well as a strange tale called "The Jigsaw Puzzle"--a guaranteed goose bump-raiser. Pen-and-ink drawings by Peter Sis nicely extend the verses and stories, combining just the right proportions of levity and mystery. This one will be a favorite.

Berenstain, Stan and Jan. THE BERENSTAIN BEARS TRICK OR TREAT. (First Time Books) unp. $5.99. Random, 1989. (ISBN 0-679-90091-8) Grades K-3

In a Halloween outing with those popular bears, Sister and Brother are planning their costumes and their route for trick or treat. There is much excitement because this year they are going with their friends and without adult supervision. Mama reminds them of the rules (e.g., not leaving the neighborhood and not eating anything until they return home). Everything is fine until their group meets up with Too-Tall Grizzly and his gang, who insist they all go to the house of old Witch McGrizz and make some mischief. They are all afraid of her and surprised when she opens the door and invites them in for wonderful candy apples. The message, of course, is that appearances can be deceiving--Miz McGrizz is really a nice person, just as Mama had said. The usual colorful and expressive illustrations help to make this book another sure winner with Berenstain fans.

Bunting, Eve. HOW MANY DAYS TO AMERICA? A THANKSGIVING STORY. unp. $14.95. Clarion Bks., 1988. (ISBN 0-89919-521-0) Grades 1-4

A Thanksgiving story with a difference, the sea journey of a small group of refugees in modern times captures, without being name-specific, the harrowing escape of persecuted people from an anonymous (presumably Caribbean) island to the shores of America--presumably Florida--where they arrive to a warm welcome on Thanksgiving Day. The story is quite simple, centering on a brown-skinned family who flee their native home after soldiers with rifles arrive one night, during which frightening event the mother hides her two children under a bed. Leaving in the night with only their dearest possessions, the family joins other disaffected natives and sets sail for America. Their tribulations at

sea are vividly caught in the spare, first-person narration by one of the two children, as well as in Beth Peck's dramatic crayon drawings. We never know the politics or places, but the suspenseful escape serves to remind many present-day Americans of their origins and the turmoil, often long forgotten or even unknown, surrounding their own ancestors' arrival in America. This book adds a special dimension to the Thanksgiving holiday, one often overlooked in the emphasis on the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the "boat people" we always honor.

Carlson, Natalie Savage. SPOOKY AND THE WITCH'S GOAT. unp. $12.88. Lothrop, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-08541-5) Grades K-3

The best of this book in the continuing adventures of Spooky the cat is the gloriously uninhibited artwork of Andrew Glass's splashy color show. When Spooky and his sidekick, Snowball, take on a witch's goat crunching under the light of the moon in their catnip bed, the goat gets the worst of the brawl--winds up, in fact, as the constellation Capricorn in a wildly wheeling, star-profligate night sky. The poor goat (one horn--he's a witch's goat, after all), the avenging cats, and the wide-eyed Bascomb family will fascinate young children's eyes as well as add a pleasant pinch of Halloween stardust to the general mix of fun.

Child, Lydia Maria. OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOOD. unp. $14.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-13873-8) Grades K-2

Iris Van Rynbach's watercolor illustrations in double-page spreads follow the Thanksgiving trip to grandmother's house made famous by this familiar song. Two to five lines of the song accompany each illustration as readers see the sights along with the family in its horse-drawn sleigh. A simple arrangement for piano and voice along with the complete lyrics follows the text and illustrations. Although these pictures may not be as attractive to children as some, the book is still a worthy addition to library shelves and a useful classroom supplement for learning and experiencing the song and for a starting point for other activities and discussions about Thanksgiving.

Cole, Joanna. A GIFT FROM SAINT FRANCIS: THE FIRST CRECHE. unp. $13.88. Morrow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-06503-1) Grades 2-5

This quietly touching volume with muted color illustrations by Michele Lemieux describes how Francis of Assisi came to devote his life to the poor (quite against the wishes of his wealthy family). It details his love for animals and his creation of the first creche to remind people of the Christmas story and the happiness he felt came from God's love for humankind. Many of the illustrations are full page with a few double-page spreads included, and they affirm well the mood and content of the text. Leisure readers will enjoy learning about this unusual man, whose life also makes the basis for a good classroom discussion on values and on sharing.

cummings, e. e. HIST WHIST. unp. $11.99. Crown, 1989. (ISBN 0-517-57258-3) Grades K-2

The deliciously shivery subject of witches and toads, goblins and devils, is made an auditory experience in this short poem by the innovative poet. Just the sounds of the words and the noises of the spectral cast carry the poem like a treat, not a trick. The quite literal illustrations by Deborah Kogan

Ray tend to overpower the wee, wily, wicked witchiness of it all--children need to hear this piece said aloud, with feeling. For those, however, who believe that all children's rhymes need "visualization," this one dramatically complies.

dePaola, Tomie. MY FIRST CHANUKAH. unp. $5.95. Putnam, 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21780-0) Grade K

In a board book format suitable for young children, dePaola introduces the symbols and customs of Chanukah. With color illustrations and simple text on each page, he explains the reason for celebrating Chanukah, describes the menorah and how the candles are lighted, and also mentions latkes, the dreidel, and Chanukah gelt. This is an appropriate source of introductory information for young children about an important holiday.

Devlin, Wende and Harry. CRANBERRY EASTER. unp. $13.95. Four Winds, 1990. (ISBN 0-02-729935-X) Grades K-3

Cranberryport is about to lose the owner of Seth's General Store because he is lonely after his wife's death and feels that no one in town needs him. To make matters worse, Seth declares that there will be no Easter egg hunt this year. Mr. Whiskers is quite upset at these bits of news. Another worried citizen of Cranberryport is Grandmother, whose friends need a place to live in town because they can no longer live alone on their farms. Young Maggie comes up with the solution to both problems when she suggests that the two older women move into the rooms over Seth's store. The whole town pitches in to make the rooms livable and cheerful, and Seth discovers a new need for his presence in this friendly, supportive town. The Easter egg hunt is better than ever (with Mr. Whiskers wearing a bunny suit), and the quiet virtues of community and friendship are reaffirmed in this simple but affecting story. The watercolor illustrations are old-fashioned and congenial accompaniment to the gentle, reassuring text.

Dickens, Charles. A CHRISTMAS CAROL. (Bantam Classics) 102 p. $1.95 paper. Bantam, 1988. (ISBN 0-553-21244-3) Grades 5-12

The attraction of this Bantam Classic paperback edition of the immortal Christmas classic is its inclusion of eyewitness accounts of Dickens' readings of the tale, including a delightfully witty reminiscence of the very first time Dickens ever read to a public audience. Apparently, the first occasion began on the stroke of midnight, Christmas Eve, when Dickens appeared before a huge audience, his voice ringing out the famous opening lines--"Marley was dead to begin with"--then pausing "as if to take in the character of the audience," and from that moment on he mesmerized them. Students will enjoy these perspectives on Dickens the public personality and gain some data as well from a short biographical sketch.

Ehrlich, Amy. THE STORY OF HANUKKAH. unp. $14.89. Dial Bks. Young, 1989. (ISBN 0-8037-0616-2) Grades K-3

The struggle of Judah the Maccabbee to regain the Jews' lost temple from the powerful army of the evil King Antiochus is retold here in simple yet moving prose. The triumphant march back into Jerusalem is marred by the discovery of the "abandoned and desolate" temple, but the men rebuild the temple to its original pure state and decide that these eight days of rebuilding and

rededication should always be honored from year to year. This introduction to Hanukkah is accompanied by expressive modern illustrations by Ori Sherman with bold colors and lines. This is a fine, informative, and moving addition to holiday collections.

Folmer, A. P. BARNABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS: A SCRATCH-AND-SNIFF STORYBOOK. unp. $5.95. Scholastic Inc., 1989. (ISBN 0-590-42892-6) Grades K-2

Barnaby is the youngest mouse in a large family. During a trip to find a Christmas tree, Barnaby finds the perfect one. On the way home, though, Barnaby eats so many acorns that he falls asleep. When he wakes up, he is lost. Everyone is gone, and new snow has covered all the tracks. He finally smells smoke and finds a house with a human family making preparations for Christmas. Barnaby joins in and makes cookies, wraps packages, and hangs ornaments on the tree. When Santa Claus comes, Barnaby tells him that he is lost, and Santa offers to take him home. When the family wakes up on Christmas morning, everyone is happy to see Barnaby, and a happy holiday is had by all. Scratch-and-sniff stickers will appeal to students' sense of exploration. Brightly colored illustrations will also attract young eyes. This Christmas selection is fine for reading aloud during quiet times.

Gordon, Shirley. CRYSTAL'S CHRISTMAS CAROL. 32 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-022239-5) Grades K-3

Susan and Sherri visit their irrepressible friend Crystal, who is filled with Christmas spirit. Crystal wants her friends to help her share this spirit by singing, but Susan is skeptical and especially reluctant to sing in public when the girls go downtown. But Crystal keeps singing--and even dancing--as she holds out her father's hat for coins from passersby. Perhaps her finest moment comes in the mall, when she asks Santa Claus what he wants for Christmas. After they leave the mall and Crystal empties her hat into the Salvation Army kettle, Susan notices that people around them are actually smiling. Susan, who had accused Crystal of spreading around the Christmas cheer "too thick," starts to sing and spread her own cheer. Edward Frascino's line drawings colored with red and green bring Crystal's antics to life and help spread the infectious, silly happiness of Crystal's Christmas spirit. Teachers will enjoy reading with their students this spirited reminder to share one's good fortune and good feelings in order to have a really good holiday.

Hall, Lynn. HERE COMES ZELDA CLAUS AND OTHER HOLIDAY DISASTERS. 149 p. $13.95. Harcourt, 1989. (ISBN 0-15-233790-3) Grades 3-5

Zelda Hammersmith lives in a trailer park with her mother--her father has gone off to Nashville to try to win fame as a country singer. Zelda is spirited and adventurous and always manages to come up with a "plan" that gets her into some kind of trouble. Holidays seem to have a special way of bringing out Zelda's totally unintended talent for mischief. At Halloween, for instance, her desire to impress with a bat costume ends up with a light fixture in the armory nearly ripped out of the ceiling and a power failure in the building. The Christmas season finds her as a Santa Claus on the lam, a Valentine's Day salute to her teacher turns into a raucous insult instead, and at Easter she has a poorly attended funeral for her guinea pig. The characters of Zelda, her mother, and her mother's best friend are believable and appealing as well as strong and able. Children should enjoy reading about the escapades of this active, good-hearted girl at Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter.

Hautzig, Deborah. HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY! 32 p. $6.99 (ISBN 0-394-92204-2). $2.95 paper (ISBN 0-394-82204-8). Random, 1989. Grades K-1

Grover, a familiar "Sesame Street" figure, makes his mother a card for Mother's Day but is distressed because he cannot think of a present to buy for her. He asks some of his friends (for instance, Bert, Ernie, Cookie Monster, and Big Bird) for ideas but still comes up with nothing appropriate. Downhearted, he goes home to his mother, who reassures him that he is her best present. This simple-to-read book with large print and Normand Chartier's color illustrations (most of them spread over two pages) will appeal to "Sesame Street" veterans and young children who worry about finding special gifts for the ones they love. It is a good choice for beginning readers who are anxious to read independently.

Hautzig, Esther. CHRISTMAS GOODIES. 64 p. $4.95 paper. Random, 1989. (ISBN 0-679-80133-2) Grades 2-6

Kiddie cooks and junior gourmets will enjoy the 28 recipes for cookies, cakes, candies, pies, breads, drinks, and one cranberry-orange relish in this "child-tested" cookbook. Following a complete list of ingredients and utensils needed for each recipe are simplified, thorough directions. Children are encouraged to wash their hands, solicit adult help with any potentially dangerous utensil or cooking process, and to use oven mitts and potholders. Recipes include Christmas mints, Christmas tree cookies, a tree-shaped cake, two punches, and an ice cream pie among many other appetizing, easy-to-do treats. Perky watercolors add charm but do not often extend instructions. Tips on gift wrapping goodies and general instructions on baking--how to grease a pan, separate an egg, scrape down batter, etc.--make up a helpful introduction. Bright colors, large print, and festive drawings will entice the intended audience. This title contains both very easy and some challenging recipes, a nice range. A fun, useful addition to holiday collections.

Hendry, Diana. CHRISTMAS ON EXETER STREET. unp. $13.99. Knopf, 1989. (ISBN 0-679-90134-5) Grades K-3

What begins as a Christmas holiday with the company of two sets of grandparents ends as a festive and daffy occasion with people sleeping in every nook and cranny of the house on Exeter Street. After grandparents have filled up the spare bedrooms, the imperturbable Mrs. Mistletoe puts the odd assortment of children and adults who arrive (most of them unexpectedly) in the attic, on the sofa, in the kitchen sink, in the bathtub, in the hallway, on the floor in sleeping bags, on cupboard shelves, on the mantelpieces, and on window sills. Before she retires for the night, Mrs. Mistletoe leaves a note for Father Christmas telling how many children are in the house (eighteen!). Christmas dinner is happy and bountiful, thanks to the contributions of almost everyone in the house. Color illustrations by John Lawrence are a busy and joyous addition to the general mood of good cheer and sharing. A cross section of the entire house showing all the people in their sleeping places should especially delight little ones. This Christmas selection is purely and simply for entertainment--a good, warm-hearted, silly laugh for a merry holiday season.

Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald. CHITA'S CHRISTMAS TREE. unp. $13.95. Bradbury Pr., 1989. (ISBN 0-02-744621-2) Grades K-2

A lovely trip back in time to old Baltimore and the ritual tree selection at Christmas, this softly colored, mistily drawn story of little Chita's special tree will calm holiday hyperactivity in the classroom. The leisurely spun tale is perfectly matched by Floyd Cooper's sepia-tinted scenes of snowy streets, horse-drawn wagons, turn-of-the-century shops and row houses, and long-ago staples like the Waffle Man and his delicious curbside treats, old-fashioned wood ranges fragrant with baking, long dresses and shawls, candlelight and cobblestone streets. The pleasant little narrative features Chita's journey with her father to select a tree in "the deep deep woods" for Santa Claus to bring her, and Chita's joy when that exact tree--Papa had carved her name on its trunk--greets her on Christmas morning, tall and twinkling in her living room, the carved letters C H I T A providing proof. The only child of one of Baltimore's first black doctors, a real-life Chita inspired this nostalgic and beautifully illustrated tale of the Christmas traditions of a black family.

Howe, James. SCARED SILLY: A HALLOWEEN TREAT. unp. $13.88. Morrow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-07667-X) Grades K-2

Harold the dog, Chester the cat, and Howie, a nervous little dachshund puppy, begin Halloween night all alone in their dark house when the Monroe family goes out trick or treating and an eerie gust of wind quenches the lights. In feline mischief, Chester spooks young Howie with Halloween lore and warnings ("Goblins look for puppies to munch"), all of which Harold pooh-poohs to comfort the pup. But as the night wears on and a take-charge witch enters the darkened house, Harold's terrier spunk and Chester's braggadocio are put to the test. This book's appeal lies in Leslie Morrill's delightful, full-color close-ups capturing the facial expressions, the dashing about, and the huddling together of the three frightened housepets--under the gaze of that strange pet rabbit of the Monroe family, Bunnicula, "his eyes gleaming, his teeth glistening." All ends well, of course, and young trick-or-treaters will stare and stare at the richly colored paintings of the animal group, the night-blotted rooms, and the costumed Monroes, while reading or listening to the deliciously shivery pages--which almost shake before their eyes!

Hurd, Thacher. LITTLE MOUSE'S VALENTINE. unp. $10.89. Har-Row, 1990. (ISBN 0-06-026193-5) Grades K-1

Brightly colored illustrations (many of them full page) and simple text combine to tell the story of Little Mouse, who makes a valentine so large that he can find no one to give it to. He searches and searches for a recipient but has no luck until he meets another mouse, Gloria. Gloria and Little Mouse have a picnic and then decide to cut the one large valentine into many smaller ones so that everyone can have a valentine (with the best one going to Gloria, naturally). Good read-aloud potential with much to talk about in the areas of sharing, friendship, and love should make this a good choice for young children.

Impey, Rose, and Sue Porter. A LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS. unp. $12.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29714-9) Grades K-2

Charlotte loves to write. She cannot read, but she can copy beautifully from other people's writing. When she writes her letter to Santa Claus, she also makes a list of what she wants for Christmas. However, she seals a shopping list with her letter instead of her Christmas list. Meanwhile, Charlotte begins worrying about how all the birds and animals will survive in the cold and snow. Sometimes, she can't even sleep. Santa Claus, who is puzzled by the small girl's unusual Christmas list, nevertheless gives her what she asks for. Charlotte is delighted because she now has food to take care of the animals. Santa also leaves her a surprise just right for a little girl. Soft watercolors emphasize the coziness of Charlotte's loving family life and help make believable her own compassion and generosity. Young children may also enjoy the sample of Charlotte's handwriting (which will remind them of their own). Readers will enjoy the text and illustrations, and teachers will find this book appropriate for sharing in class and discussing the importance of thinking of others.

Kroll, Steven. IT'S APRIL FOOLS' DAY! unp. $13.95. Holiday, 1990. Grades K-1

Alice the kitten is afraid to go out of her house on April Fools' Day because she knows that Horace will have some mean tricks planned to play on her. Sure enough he does, and finally Alice gets fed up with his pouring water on her and pulling her tail, among other things. She decides to play some tricks on Horace, whose ultimate reaction is to promise never to play mean tricks on Alice again. Now they can play together and truly be friends. Ink and watercolor illustrations by Jeni Bassett charmingly depict the action and moods of the story, and children will be drawn to the bright colors and energy of the illustrations. The messages that fair play is fun play and that bullies will bully only so long as allowed are presented in a warm and gentle way that will invite classroom discussion.

Limburg, Peter R. WEIRD! THE COMPLETE BOOK OF HALLOWEEN WORDS. 122 p. $12.95. Bradbury Pr., 1989. (ISBN 0-02-759050-X) Grades 4-8

Every word associated with Halloween, from <u>apple</u> and <u>bat</u> to <u>quail</u>, <u>quiver</u>, and <u>quake</u>, to, of course, <u>witch</u> and <u>weird</u>, is traced to its historical and etymological origins by Peter Limburg in a fine, fascinating reference for Halloween collections and dictionaries in general. Betsy Lewin's black-and-white illustrations are amusing, providing just the right touch for Limburg's engrossing text. Literary associations of the familiar Halloween cast of characters extend the reference potential of this title. For example, the word <u>weird</u> owes its current meaning to Shakespeare, we learn, who introduced it in the famous Scene 3 of Act I in <u>Macbeth</u> in which the three "weird sisters" chant over their bubbling cauldron. Later, both Shelley and Keats promoted the sense of "strange," "bizarre," or "odd" which now attaches to the word, thus assisting the permutation from its original meaning of "fate" or "destiny." By all means, plan on a busy circulation for this excellent reference with its clean, uncluttered format that invites both perusal and close reading.

Livingston, Myra Cohn, sel. HALLOWEEN POEMS. 32 p. $12.95. Holiday, 1989. (ISBN 0-8234-0762-4) Grades 3-5

All the spooky fun of Halloween appears in this lively collection of poems and the captivating (and pleasantly scary) black-and-white illustrations by Stephen Gammell. The eighteen poems include ones by X. J. Kennedy, Harry Behn, Myra Cohn Livingston, Lilian Moore, and Lee Bartlett, and they cover a wide range of Halloween horrors such as bats, witches, goblins, ghosts, skeletons, magic houses, jack-o-lanterns, and cemeteries. Young readers will get thrills and chills suitable for Halloween and may enjoy sharing these poems aloud with their classmates.

Lubin, Leonard B. CHRISTMAS GIFT-BRINGERS. unp. $12.88. Lothrop, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-07020-5) Grades 2-5

Little Sidney the mouse doesn't believe that Santa Claus exists. In order to convince Sidney that Santa Claus is real, Sidney's father takes him to a pile of old books in the attic, where he reads him the stories of many of the world's bringers of gifts: Saint Nicholas, Sinter Claes and Black Peter, Father Christmas, the Christkindl, Jultomten and Julbock, Julnisse, Star Man, the Magi, and Befana and Babouschka. After hearing all of these stories of generosity, love, and concern, Sidney is convinced and runs home to hang his stocking. Lubin's color illustrations with each page of text are rich in detail for young eyes and do a good job of setting the appropriate moods. A good source of information about Christmas customs around the world, this book is a good choice for reading aloud to younger students or independent reading by older ones.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS: SONGS OF THE SEASON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ARRANGED BY DAN FOX. 80 p. $16.45. Arcade Pub. Inc., 1989. (ISBN 1-55970-043-2) (Available from Little) Grades 2-8

Art is as important as music in this collection of twenty-five familiar Christmas songs such as "Away in a Manger," "Silent Night," "Jingle Bells," "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," "Joy to the World," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Art (including, among other types, paintings, woodcuts, stained glass, lithographs, and manuscript illuminations) from the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection accompanies each song. Simple piano arrangements (also suitable for organ, violin, or recorder) with guitar chords will suit beginning and intermediate musicians, and the selections will provide a good sampling of songs from several centuries and many moods. An index of first lines and guitar chord diagrams are included. This beautiful book provides opportunities not only for making music but also for discussing the relationship between art and music and between religion and art. Some students may want to check out this book to share with their families.

Moore, Clement Clarke. THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS. unp. $2.50 paper. Scholastic Inc., 1989. (ISBN 0-590-42758-X) Grades K-Up

John Steven Gurney's witty illustrations invite all ages to reread the classic story-poem by Clement Moore in a rendition which explores artistic possibilities often untapped by the typically sentimental or fulsome styles filling Christmas bookstore windows. From the first page with its large close-up of a snug tabby cat curled in sleep under an old-fashioned Christmas

tree, three slumbering little mice nestled in the curve of her brindled tail, this version emphasizes unusual details and perspectives. Santa's reindeer stretch out comfortably on the snowy roof to rest and look on with interest (except for one curious deer who wanders off to inspect the premises) as that jolly old elf descends through the chimney. The sleigh, sensibly, straddles the peak of the roof, its reins flung aside as the reindeer take a breather. The vaulted, moonlit sky, the reindeer's shadows cast against snowcapped roofs and moon-mottled houses, the steep heights suggested by angled views of dormer windows and building wings, all offer a lofty perspective on the skyscape so often depicted as just another big field slightly above the ground or, conversely, so far above it as to be indistinguishable. Santa's agility and that of his hardy team will be appreciated more fully after readers gaze at the rooftops and precipices scaled by them in these full-color, exciting pictures.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. KEEPING A CHRISTMAS SECRET. unp. $13.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31447-7) Grades K-2

At the dinner table, four-year-old Michael blurts out the family's Christmas secret--Dad is getting a shiny new sled from them!--and suffers in silent shame, befriended only by the dog, as his two older siblings moan and groan. Quickly, though, Michael gets mysteriously busy wrapping an old spaghetti box, refusing to divulge its contents even on Christmas day--"And you can't open it unless you guess what's inside." Later, tired from sledding, the family suddenly realizes that Dad's big new toy is quite a hefty load without a rope to pull it. Ah, ha! Inside the spaghetti box thrust at him, Dad finds an old jump rope relieved of its handles while Michael revels in his reinstatement among his former chiders, who goodnaturedly praise their little brother's foresight. Lena Shiffman's simple, full-color illustrations capture Michael's dilemma and the isolation he feels. A big brown dog, lovingly attentive, completes this little domestic drama with which many a younger child will guiltily identify, at the same time perceiving that creative solutions are available to her or him. A fine read-aloud for the holiday season.

Nordqvist, Sven. MERRY CHRISTMAS, FESTUS AND MERCURY. unp. $12.95. Carolrhoda Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-87614-383-4) Grades K-3

Exceptional illustrations highlight this tale of a Christmas that turns out to be much better than expected. Festus, an old farmer, hurts his foot on Christmas Eve and cannot shop for food, chop down a tree, or do other customary chores that make the holiday a celebration for him and his cat, Mercury. Friendly neighbors soon discover their plight, however, and Festus and Mercury have more food and visitors than usual. Children will delight in the multitude of detail in the spirited illustrations, and they will recognize their own feelings and moods in the adorable, feisty character of Mercury the cat. Teachers will enjoy reading this book aloud with their students, and everyone will have fun exploring Nordqvist's busy and entertaining illustrations.

Patterson, Nancy Ruth. THE CHRISTMAS CUP. 71 p. $13.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08421-3) Grades 3-6

The summer before third grade, Megan McCallie, who lives in Missouri earlier in the century, opens a lemonade stand and with her earnings buys a beaten up milkshake cup at an auction next door. Megan is miserable about her hasty

purchase until her grandmother suggests making a Christmas cup out of it. They would hide the cup and put in it all the extra money they could come up with. They would also keep a list of all the people who had been good to them that year and at Christmas select one to receive an anonymous gift from them. The recipient turns out to be someone Megan would never have guessed as a source of good will and kindness--the stern and forbidding principal of her school, Miss Finney. Other episodes of Megan's life during the months before Christmas are also included, most of them centered around learning to look beyond appearances to what people really are. Some may find this book overly sentimental and just a bit too sweet to be believed, but others may appreciate the message that joy truly is in the giving.

Polacco, Patricia. UNCLE VOVA'S TREE. unp. $14.95. Philomel Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21617-0) Grades K-3

Several children go with their grandparents to their uncle's home at Epiphany to celebrate the holiday season in the traditional Russian style of their family. They wear traditional clothing and delight in the scent of evergreen and the aroma of wonderful food. Uncle Vova and Aunt Svetlana celebrate the holiday with youthful, loving enthusiasm that brings joy to everyone. After a sleigh ride, the family decorates an evergreen tree that Uncle Vova and Aunt Svetlana planted when they first settled in their new home. Berries, popcorn, suet, and grain provide a Christmas feast for the birds. The following Christmas Uncle Vova is gone, but a place is set for him at the table, the evergreen is decorated, and the miracle of love continues its work. Colorful single- and double-page illustrations help bring to life this story of love and hope that makes a strong case for the security and warmth of tradition. While older children can enjoy this book alone, teachers will find it good for reading aloud with younger students.

Roche, P.K., sel. AT CHRISTMAS BE MERRY. 32 p. $3.95 paper. Viking, 1989. (ISBN 0-14-050680-2) Grades K-1

Simple poems and rhymes accompany a series of colorful illustrations that follow a bear family through the Christmas holidays. Mother Goose is represented here as are Eleanor Farjeon, Valerie Worth Bahlke, Washington Irving, Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, and others. Readers see Christmas preparation at home and in the village, Christmas decorations, the events of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and the fun and fatigue that follow. Children should enjoy the warm, genial illustrations with their wide array of animals. This is a pleasant collection to share during quiet times.

Rogers, Jacqueline. THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT. unp. $12.95. G&D, 1989. (ISBN 0-448-40151-7) Grades K-2

Narration of the Christmas story is accompanied by detailed and expressive single- and double-page color illustrations of preparations for a Christmas pageant in a rural area. Readers see children making scenery and costumes, rehearsing, and presenting their play. Simple arrangements of Christmas songs that complement the narration (e.g., "Away in a Manger" and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing") are included. This book provides the ingredients for a Christmas pageant but also demonstrates the playmaking process. Young readers and listeners should enjoy seeing children accomplishing such a task on their own.

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. NATE THE GREAT AND THE HALLOWEEN HUNT. 48 p. $11.95. Coward, 1989. (ISBN 0-698-20635-5) Grades 1-3

Fans of Nate the Great will enjoy the kid sleuth's successful search for Little Hex, a kitten who disappears on Halloween night. Through shrewd deduction, Nate traces Little Hex's movements back to the point of his last known appearance but not, of course, until he and his dog Sludge survive a scary adventure in a haunted house where Nate almost, but never quite, loses his cool. Marc Simont's darkly tinted drawings highlighted in charcoals, oranges, and blues keep pace with the plot and the pranks. Rosamond and Esmeralda, along with Sludge's tormentor Fang--dressed as Little Red Riding Hood, add to the antics comically described in Nate's typical, deadpanned style.

Solotareff, Gregoire. NOEL'S CHRISTMAS SECRET. unp. $13.95. Farrar, 1989. (ISBN 0-374-35544-4) Grades K-2

As a young boy, Noel is recruited by three dwarf magicians to help them deliver presents on Christmas Eve. The dwarfs make Noel a secret promise that he can tell no one, and Noel continues to help the dwarfs year after year until he is a man with a white beard. The dwarfs decide that Noel can now make the trip without them--after all, their secret promise was that Noel would become Santa Claus and live forever. Brightly colored illustrations accompany the text. Youngsters who like fantasy may enjoy this imaginary explanation of how Santa Claus came to be.

Stevenson, James. UN-HAPPY NEW YEAR, EMMA! unp. $12.88. Greenwillow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-08343-9) Grades 2-4

Poor Emma, a well-meaning and trusting little witch, her cat Botsford (her "familiar"), and her owl Roland suffer outrageously from the wicked pranks of Dolores and Lavinia, a couple of bad, bad witches bent on making life miserable for the three. After numerous disasters, including being pushed headlong over a cliff and toiling to clear an interminable path through snowdrifts, Emma wises up and conspires with her companions to avenge their punishment in a clever scheme involving a magic potion and an invasion of galumphids. Stevenson's comic-strip framing and balloon dialogue reinforce the fun-and-games feeling of the action-packed, pen-and-ink, softly colored illustrations. Young readers will enjoy the vivid faces and high-powered shenanigans of the witch colony, although they will not find much about New Year celebrations here--Emma does throw a New Year's breakfast at the end, an anti-climactic wrap-up. This one's a witch book for the general Hallowe'en collection as much as it is a New Year's selection.

Sturgis, Matthew. TOSCA'S CHRISTMAS. unp. $10.95. Dial Bks. Young, 1989. (ISBN 0-8037-0722-3) Grades K-2

A thoroughly charming British import describes the plight of a kitty who finds herself overlooked, in the way, or just rudely shooed off during her family's busy pre-Christmas wrapping and trimming, baking and decorating. An adorable cat whose displacement is wonderfully depicted in Anne Mortimer's unerring illustrations of a spoiled, playful feline, Tosca gets herself tossed outside into the wintry night after she manages to pull down the Christmas tree. Her rescue is effected by none other than Santa himself in a creative ending that will give young children some thoughtful tips on pet treatment during the holidays. A warm story and a beguiling cat, this one would enchant even Ebenezer Scrooge. Lovely watercolors animated with Beatrix Potter-like wit and whimsy complete a very special book.

Walter, Mildred Pitts. HAVE A HAPPY . . . 106 p. $12.88. Lothrop, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-06924-X) Grades 4-7

The Afro-American celebration called Kwanzaa provides the context of this story of eleven-year-old Chris, a whiz at crafts and woodworking, whose December 25 birthday, as usual, seems to get lost in the general fanfare marking Christmas Day, plus the seven-day festivities of Kwanzaa, which also coincides with Christmas. His father out of a job and his mother working full time and overtime as a nurse, Chris and his younger sister face a bleak holiday, made bleaker by Chris's yearning for a bicycle which the budget won't allow. The simple plot elements of an unhappy but basically good young boy, a kind but frustrated father, a busy mother, and a winsome small sister are spiced by the Kwanzaa festival interwoven in the plot and the woodworking skills Chris brings to both holidays. Readers new to the service honoring black Americans' African origins and their American home will enjoy the details of the occasion, so smoothly incorporated into the narrative that they never become an excuse for the book. Carole Byard's perceptive black-and-white illustrations strengthen this thoroughly satisfactory Christmas-plus story.

Yolen, Jane. BEST WITCHES POEMS FOR HALLOWEEN. unp. $14.95. Putnam, 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21539-5) Grades 3-6

Twenty-one poems about witches and goblins and a warlock's cat, not to mention gnarled, cryptic old men, some fast creeping ivy, and an odd couple ("Tombmates"), one compulsively neat and the other intolerably sloppy with a penchant for jeering the neatnik as "Mausoleum Breath" and "White Eyes." These irrepressible Halloween poems range from wacky to scary, from thoughtful to witty, and feature some modern-day witch types, such as Flo who sends her black hat and broom back to the department store with an irate poem-letter ("I'm returning hat and broom. / I won't be caught dead in a tomb / In either of these items."). Elise Primavera's wonderfully droll illustrations fill up the pages and provide the perfect background for the poems superimposed on dark night skies and crypt floors--even on the high-rise carpet of an aerobic witch exercising with her cats to TV instruction. A variety of spooky effects--patchy fogs, distant stars, moons low-slung and strangely lit, straggly grass and lengthy shadows--reinforce the poems, providing a visual and a verbal delight.

Books in a Series

Baker, James W. HOLIDAY MAGIC BOOKS. each 48 p. each $7.95. Lerner Pubns., 1989, 1990. Grades 3-6

APRIL FOOLS' DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2230-6)
ARBOR DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2235-7)
COLUMBUS DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2237-3)
INDEPENDENCE DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2236-5)
NEW YEAR'S MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2231-4)
PRESIDENT'S DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2232-2)
ST. PATRICK'S DAY MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2234-9)
THANKSGIVING MAGIC. (ISBN 0-8225-2233-0)

Magic tricks centered on holiday themes are the focal point of these small books, which also include a brief introduction and tips for performing well (e.g., practicing and never performing the same trick for the same audience). Most of the books contain ten tricks with the description of each divided into

three sections: how the trick looks, how to make it, and how to do it. The texts are clear and straightforward, and young magicians should have little if any trouble finding the materials to do the tricks. George Overlie's simple drawings in three colors provide the added assistance of visual instructions. This series offers good material for budding magicians as well as resource material for those looking for ways to acknowledge a wide variety of holidays.

Fradin, Dennis Brindell. BEST HOLIDAY BOOKS. each 48 p. each $12.95. Enslow Pubs., 1990. Grades 2-4

COLUMBUS DAY. (ISBN 0-89490-233-4)
HALLOWEEN. (ISBN 0-89490-234-2)
LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY. (ISBN 0-89490-250-4)
THANKSGIVING. (ISBN 0-89490-236-9)
VALENTINE'S DAY. (ISBN 0-89490-237-7)
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY. (ISBN 0-89490-235-0)

Each volume contains a general introduction followed by the background and historical development of each holiday. Various holiday traditions are explained as well as some differences between present and past celebrations. Black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs accompany the large-print text. A glossary and index make each of these books useful as a resource for reports. They are also suitable supplementary material for any discussion of holidays.

THE HOLIDAYS SERIES. 8 titles each 48 p. $87.60. each $10.95. Crestwood Hse., 1990. Grades 4-8

CHRISTMAS (ISBN 0-89686-497-9); COLUMBUS DAY (ISBN 0-89686-498-7); EASTER (ISBN 0-89686-499-5); HALLOWEEN (ISBN 0-89686-500-2); JEWISH HOLIDAYS (ISBN 0-89686-502-9); PATRIOTIC HOLIDAYS (ISBN 0-89686-501-0); THANKSGIVING (ISBN 0-89686-503-7); VALENTINE'S DAY (ISBN 0-89686-504-5)

This series provides a significant amount of information on various holidays, some of it not always found in other holiday books. Subjects are handled in an evenhanded manner. Even the religious holidays are presented in an objective way. Each volume discusses the historical background of the holiday and its development, various ways it is celebrated today, and other interesting tidbits of information related to the holiday. Black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs with captions illuminate the text. Suggestions for further reading and an index complete each book. Students and teachers will find these books to be handy resources for projects and reports as well as good supplementary reading for classroom discussion.

BOOKS (WITH RECORDINGS)

Capote, Truman. A CHRISTMAS MEMORY. slipcased hardcover book and cassette tape $19.95. Knopf, 1989. (ISBN 0-394-82500-4) Grades 3-12

Capote's classic holiday story is presented here with illustrations by Beth Peck. They are gentle, expressive renderings of the events in the story of seven-year-old Buddy and his elderly cousin. It is late November, time to bake the many fruitcakes they send each year to people they admire (including ones they don't know, such as Franklin D. Roosevelt). Together these two best

friends savor the moments of cake creation: finding pecans, buying illegal whiskey, and drinking up the leftover whiskey (even the dog gets a spoonful in her coffee). Angry relatives nearly spoil their celebration, but they are energized once again by the cutting down and decorating of a tree with homemade ornaments. They make each other kites for Christmas and fly them. That is their last Christmas together. Buddy is sent away to school, and his dear friend finally dies, taking a piece of his heart with her. A cassette recording of the story, well read by Celeste Holme, accompanies the book. One of the most beautiful of all holiday stories, this honoring of friendship, love, compassion, and unconditional acceptance is a worthy addition to all library shelves.

Cooper, Don. HANUKKAH SONGS AND GAMES. paperback book and cassette tape $5.95. Random, 1989. (ISBN 0-679-80041-7) Grades K-2

The activity book and cassette combine to provide ways to celebrate Hanukkah. Songs and activities such as follow the dot, finding a secret code, mazes, and finding silly objects in a picture are included in the activity book. There are also directions for playing the dreidel game, a recipe for latkes, instructions for making a Star of David mobile, and a pattern for making a dreidel. All of the songs in the activity book are well sung on the cassette, and the tunes are rhythmic and catchy. The fact that there is only one activity book will necessarily limit classroom use of some of the paper-and-pencil activities, but the songs and some other suggested activities should be not only a help for young Jewish children in celebrating Hanukkah but a delightful way for classmates to learn more about and honor one of the holidays that fall in the winter season.

DIRECTORY

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